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FOR THOSE WHO WERE RAISED ON ROCK

October - November 2019

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Q&A

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'DOUBLE LIVE GONZO!' REVISITED

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AGENTS OF FORTUNE

AEROSMITH
THE MAKING OF 'PERMANENT VACATION'

THUNDER
LOW LIFE IN HIGH PLACES

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HIS LOVE FOR MOTT THE HOOPLE

SAMMY HAGAR
MONTROSE, FLYING SOLO & VAN HALEN

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ACE FREHLEY

THE KISS LEGEND SPEAKS!

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW!

THE CULT ON 'SONIC TEMPLE'

"IT WAS BIG FAT GROOVES, ALL HEAVY AND DARK"

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Editing this issue's feature on band logos and where they came from allowed me to enjoy a little trip down memory lane, going back to the time when the embroidered denim jacket was the height of heavy metal fashion in the UK. It seems almost quaint now, but when I first started listening to heavy music at the tail end of the '70s, the denim jacket was a vital part of rock culture. It signified a dedication to a certain kind of music, a certain lifestyle, and those of us who wore these jackets took the business of decorating them very seriously.

The greatest irony of it was surely the fact that a bunch of testosterone-fuelled young men (for the wearers of the denim jacket were mostly male) found something exciting in the art of needlework, spending hours sewing the names and logos of their favourite bands on the back of their jackets. On the surface it didn't seem like the most macho of pursuits, but that didn't seem to bother any of us as we got to work with needle and thread, working out the best way to faithfully reproduce Iron Maiden, Judas Priest, Thin Lizzy or AC/DC. Doubtless some people cheated and got their mums to do it for them. But I remember conversations outside venues and in nearby pubs where rockers would proudly explain how they'd chosen the bands that adorned their jackets and how many painstaking hours of personal sacrifice had gone into reproducing the Rush 'naked man' logo. I'm sure a psychologist would have a field day with all this stuff!

As for me, well my mum was useless at anything practical. So with a burning urge to show my passion for the Scorpions I set about sewing – what else? – a scorpion onto my jacket. It was, it must be said, a God-awful attempt. For some reason I used overly thick, lime green wool. Perhaps it was all I could get my hands on. Whatever the reason, it was a very bad idea. The end result looked nothing like a scorpion and a lot like a radioactive blob. I wore the jacket anyway, most likely to the amusement of the finer practitioners of the art. I jettisoned the logo jacket pretty quickly when I decided I was far more stylish than that, opting for the satin tour jacket and the spray-on jeans at the start of the '80s. In retrospect it wasn't really a better look. And 40 years on I now look back on 'The Embroidered Denim Jacket Years' with great affection. I imagine you do too.

Enjoy the issue.

Howard Johnson – Editor
Email me at **hojo@rockcandymag.com**

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ACE FREHLEY

FLYING HIGH AGAIN

Ace Frehley is the man who gave the original **Kiss** line-up one hugely important attribute – attitude – and he remains a massive favourite with the band's hardcore fans to this day. **Dave Reynolds** hooks up with the guitarist for a wide-ranging interview...

DESPITE ADMITTING TO HAVING never taken a guitar lesson and being purely self-taught, Paul Daniel 'Ace' Frehley became one of the most influential players of all-time as one of the four original members of Kiss.

The band was formed in 1973 from the ashes of various New York outfits including Gene Simmons' and Paul Stanley's band Wicked Lester. With the help of visionary manager Bill Aucoin and Casablanca label boss Neil Bogart, the quartet quickly became one of America's greatest concert attractions, in addition to achieving multi-platinum record sales as they kicked their platform-booted way from their mid- to late-'70s heyday into a more challenging period for them in the early '80s.

Ace Frehley gained his nickname after showing an impressive ability to snare girlfriends at school. Although his musical achievements were framed against a background of personal excess that involved copious amounts of drugs, booze and women (along with the odd wrecked DeLorean automobile), as he rightly points out he was never fired from Kiss. He enjoyed, effectively, two stints with the self-styled 'hottest band in the world', the first ending in late 1982 and the second starting when the original band reunited in 1996.

Born in the Bronx, New York in 1951, Frehley first quit the band as Kiss were about to make a 'return to form' comeback after the disaster that was the conceptual '(Music From) The Elder' recording in 1981. Although he appeared on the cover artwork of Kiss's 'Creatures Of The Night', released in October 1982, and participated in the video for the 'I Love It Loud' single, Ace played no part in the actual recording of the album and officially announced his departure after completing a promotional tour of Europe at the end of that year.

HAVING SIGNED a deal with Megaforce Records (at the time an Atlantic Records affiliate) the guitarist's first post-Kiss album finally emerged in 1987. Interestingly, Ace chose to launch his new project as a band rather than as a pure solo outing and had carefully assembled a collection of talented musicians. The amusingly titled Frehley's Comet included ex-707 vocalist/guitarist Tod Howarth (who'd replaced Ace's original choice of right hand man, Richie Scarlet, in the line-up), former Peter Frampton bassist John Regan, and Frehley's long-time partner-in-crime, drummer Anton Fig (of Spider/Shanghai/David Letterman fame). After the eponymous debut album's modest success, a year down the line 'Second Sighting' didn't sell as well as everyone expected. The problem was that there just weren't enough Ace Frehley songs on it. Indeed, *Rock Candy Mag* editor Howard Johnson noted in his review of the album in issue 190 of *Kerrang!* back in June 1988 that Ace "hasn't been the egotistical bastard that all great guitarists are... he hasn't taken the music by the scruff of the neck and made it all his own."

It was all change for Frehley's next solo album, as Ace dropped the Frehley's Comet moniker to revert to his own name. 1989's 'Trouble Walkin'' also found him reunited with original Frehley's Comet member Richie Scarlet and veteran producer Eddie Kramer, with whom Ace had recorded not only as a member of Kiss, but also on his legendary first solo album released in 1978. A pretty solid affair, 'Trouble Walkin'' regained a little of the ground lost with 'Second Sighting', but not enough to enable him to follow it up with anything sturdier.

AFTER LOSING the Megaforce deal it wouldn't be until 2009, some 20 years later, that the Spaceman's ►

Photo: Getty Images/Fin Costello/Redferns

ACE FREHLEY

Ace knows how to Kiss and make up

next solo studio release, 'Anomaly', appeared. Frehley had signed up to the reunion of the original Kiss line-up in 1996 and the first 'together again' tour was successful. But cracks would appear over time, resulting in the eventual departures of both Ace in 2002 and drummer Peter Criss in 2004.

Kiss's undisputed leadership team of bassist/vocalist Gene Simmons and rhythm guitarist/vocalist Paul Stanley has subsequently chosen to continue with former Black 'N Blue guitarist Tommy Thayer, who had been in the fold since 1994, and former Badlands and Black Sabbath drummer Eric Singer, who first came in to replace Eric Carr. Controversially, Thayer and Singer have adopted the Spaceman and Catman characters popularised by Frehley and Criss.

> "THERE WAS ALWAYS COMPETITION IN KISS, ALTHOUGH THE FIERCEST COMPETITION WAS BETWEEN GENE AND PAUL. IT STILL IS. I'D NOT FIGHT ABOUT IT TOO MUCH BECAUSE I'D ALWAYS GET THE SPOTLIGHT ON STAGE FOR MY SOLOS. BUT IT WAS HEALTHY COMPETITION, BECAUSE WE CREATED SOMETHING SPECIAL."

HAVING BEEN sober for over a decade now, Frehley has been extremely proactive over the last few years, successfully resurrecting his solo career in 2014 with 'Space Invader' and subsequently being more prolific than in the previous 20 years! He's also been building plenty of bridges with Simmons and Stanley, despite a recent verbal spat over the current Kiss 'End Of The Road' tour. The former played bass and co-wrote two songs with Ace on last year's 'Spaceman' offering. The latter provided lead vocals on a fine version of Free's 'Fire And Water' on Ace's covers album, 'Origins, Vol. 1'.

When *Rock Candy Mag* caught up with Ace recently, we found him in fine form and as candid as ever when discussing his career...

YOU HAVE A NEW SOLO ALBUM DUE AT THE END OF THIS YEAR CALLED 'ORIGINS, VOL. 2' – THE SEQUEL TO YOUR FIRST COVERS ALBUM 'ORIGINS, VOL. 1' FROM 2016. IS THE CONCEPT THE SAME, WHERE YOU COLLABORATE WITH GUEST ARTISTS?

"Yes it is. I've got John 5 playing guitar, as he did on the first volume, Bruce Kulick plays on Jimi Hendrix's 'Manic Depression' and Lita Ford, whom I've known ever since she was in The Runaways and who was also on 'Vol. 1', is contributing again. Lita and Cheap Trick's Robin Zander are the two guest vocalists. Robin's singing lead on Humble Pie's '30 Days In The Hole', while Lita's done 'Jumpin' Jack Flash' by the Rolling Stones. She came to my house and I coached her for two days. She came up with some great ideas when it came to changing the arrangement and absolutely nailed the song."

WERE YOU PLEASED WITH THE RESPONSE TO YOUR LAST ALBUM, 2018'S 'SPACEMAN'?

"Yeah, I think it was received quite well. I'm really happy with it. Obviously it had the two tracks I co-wrote with

Gene Simmons ['Without You I'm Nothing' and 'Your Wish Is My Command'], but I'm really surprised that the cover of Eddie Money's 'I Wanna Go Back' didn't raise more eyebrows. It's one of my favourite songs on the record. I always thought it was a well-written song and I love the lyrics. I started playing it live and it works really well."

Ace gives it a knee drop to solo back in '75

WHAT DID 'SPACEMAN' TELL US ABOUT ACE THAT WE DIDN'T ALREADY KNOW?

"I don't think it gave anybody any new insight into me. It's the same writing, same playing that I've done over the last 40 years. But I do think it shows consistency and fortitude. I've been regularly churning out albums that have always sold well and I know that 'Origins, Vol. 2' will be well received."

YOU SEEM VERY PASSIONATE ABOUT YOUR SPECIALIST SUBJECT IN 'PURSUIT OF ROCK AND ROLL'. DEFIANT, EVEN?

"My first wife Jeanette told me she thought that should've been the first single from the 'Spaceman' album. I'm still as enthused as ever about rock'n'roll, especially because the switch to a new band line-up has made it much easier to tour. I also have a new road manager. The old guy was a little on the nervous side, but the new guy is more laid back and doesn't get rattled easily. I also find myself enjoying flying more than I used to. That certainly helps. I mean, I'm going to Atlanta this week and then on to Lexington and I'm really looking forward to it. Everything just feels so much easier!"

THE FIRST TIME I HEARD 'ROCKIN' WITH THE BOYS', WITH ITS LYRIC ABOUT *"WE'VE HAD OUR DIFFERENCES"*, I ASSUMED IT WAS ABOUT YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH KISS. BUT ON CLOSER SCRUTINY IT SEEMS TO BE MORE TO DO WITH TIRING OF BEING ON THE ROAD.

"I think it's easier now I'm a seasoned racehorse! When I used to party I was my own worst enemy, because waking up with a hangover every day wasn't good. I'm healthier now and it's all about fine tuning. The changes I've made to my lifestyle have been good. I'm in the groove now. For example, I've been staying with my daughter Monique and catching up with her in California. I found it's easier to get a flight out from the airport 10 minutes from her house [John Wayne Airport at Newport Beach] than go through the stress of having to fly from LAX [Los Angeles International]. It's those little changes that can make all the difference."

SUBJECT-WISE, THAT SONG HAS AN AIR OF 'BETH' ABOUT IT... *"I'LL GIVE YOU A BUZZ WHEN I TAKE A BREAK, NOW I'M ROCKING WITH THE BOYS."*

"I find it interesting how people interpret lyrics and can get different things from them. I write lyrics so quickly that I really don't put too much effort into them. Sometimes I do feel things are beamed into my head! I mean, I never took a guitar lesson, yet now I'm considered an influential guitar player. I just had visions of being a rock star when I was 17 and it's been a rollercoaster ride ever since. I'm a lot more focused now, though!"

> "IN KISS GENE AND PAUL KNEW HOW TO PUSH MY BUTTONS AND A LOT OF THE TIME I'D DRINK BECAUSE OF DECISIONS THEY MADE. I'VE LONG SINCE LEARNT TO NOT HAVE ANY RESENTMENT AND TO WORK THROUGH ANY PROBLEMS THAT I'VE BEEN FACING."

YOU HAVE THAT NEW BAND, OF COURSE...

"Yeah, they were playing with Gene in his solo band. I still can't remember their surnames though, but Jeremy [Asbrock] – the guitar player – plays leads with me on the version of Zeppelin's 'Good Times, Bad Times' that will be on 'Origins, Vol. 2'. I first met them when I played with Gene in Australia and went on to play eight shows with them on my own in Japan [the line-up is completed by guitarist Ryan Cook, bassist Philip Shouse and drummer Christopher Williams]. It was so successful and carefree that I decided to keep this band and fire the old line-up, which was really tough as [guitarist] Richie Scarlet's wife had just died. But I did it for economical reasons as when the new guys aren't playing with me they go out on their own. The thing is, they're younger and hungrier and I didn't have to teach them anything. They knew all my songs. I didn't have to show them anything, so the whole musical transition was effortless."

BUT AT THE AGE OF 68 TOURING MUST BE FAR HARDER THAN IN YOUR YOUTH?

"I've been on the road most of my life, so I actually feel at home in a hotel room, so long as it's a nice hotel of course! Airports don't bother me, but I'm not a big fan of touring in a bus. I think it's something to do with the vibration of the road, as well as the fact I really don't like being confined in a bus for the length of time that many of those trips take."

Photos: Getty Images/Robin Platzer/IMAGES; Getty Images/Richard E. Aaron/Redferns

FEATURE

ACE FREHLEY

IT'S BEEN FOUR YEARS SINCE YOU LAST PLAYED THE UK, AT DOWNLOAD 2015. WHAT'S THE LIKELIHOOD OF MAKING IT OVER ON THE CURRENT TOUR?
"I'm getting offered a lot of festivals in Europe, but I've made no commitments at this time. I've had interest from Germany and Sweden, but I wouldn't leave out the UK because I have a lot of good memories of playing there – although a lot of them are sketchy! I used to find [UFO bassist] Pete Way knocking on my door a lot when I was in England and he'd pull out cans of Special Brew! But I've stopped drinking and am in a much better place, health-wise. I'm going to be 70 in two years' time and people have been telling me that I look younger now than I did 20 years ago!"

YOU'VE BEEN SOBER FOR, WHAT, 11 YEARS?
"13 years. My life is easier, focused on the tasks in hand and my future is bright."

PRESUMABLY LIFE IS FAR HAPPIER AND SIMPLER?
"Yeah, I've been doing a lot of energy work and been drawing out all the negative energy from my body. I just dropped seven pounds after I read on social media that people had been commenting about my weight and thinking I'd gone back to my old ways. That gave me a kick to get back on the no-carbs diet. So all is good and I'm really happy with everything."

CAN WE TALK A BIT ABOUT YOUR STYLE OF GUITAR PLAYING? I'VE READ THAT IN A TECHNICAL SENSE YOU DON'T KNOW HOW YOU DO WHAT YOU DO...
"According to this woman who I go to in order to have my cards read, I've had a past life where I've lived in another galaxy! It's amazing, which might explain it! And on the subject of card reading, when she reads my cards the same ones always come up, which rarely happens."

> "I KNOW ALL THE MOVES, I KNOW ALL THE CUES. I HAVEN'T WORN THE MAKE-UP SINCE I DID A DUNKIN' DONUTS COMMERCIAL IN 2007, AND I DON'T RELISH PUTTING IT BACK ON, BECAUSE I'D HAVE TO SHAVE OFF MY BEARD, BUT I'M SURE IT WOULD BECOME REALLY EASY PRETTY QUICKLY!"

AND YET THE LIKES OF SLASH, JOHN 5, DAVE MUSTAINE, MIKE MCCREADY AND THE LATE, GREAT DIMEBAG CITE YOU AS A PRIME INFLUENCE. THAT'S A PRETTY DIVERSE LIST.
"I'm flattered by it and it's been fun to play with many of the guys who've cited me as an influence. I recently did a show with the Kings Of Chaos alongside Gilby Clarke, Warren DeMartini, James LoMenzo, Matt Sorum and

Will we get to see this one last time?

Kiss photographed in Los Angeles, January 1978. Ace appears to be having a hard time staying awake

Lost in music!

Sebastian Bach. Sebastian is an old friend. James LoMenzo has played bass in my band in the past and I've played with both Gilby and Matt before too. In fact Matt helped me with my instructional video, *Behind The Player*, back in 2009. It's always fun working with any of those guys. Oh, and Slash, of course, played on the cover of Thin Lizzy's 'Emerald' on 'Origins, Vol. 1'."

WHAT ABOUT THE COMPETITIVE ELEMENT THAT MIGHT HAVE EXISTED WHEN YOU WERE IN KISS? IT'S GENERALLY ACKNOWLEDGED THAT YOUR ALBUM AND PAUL'S WERE SUPERIOR TO GENE'S AND PETER'S. PEOPLE REALLY LOVED YOUR HIT SINGLE 'NEW YORK GROOVE'. DID YOU SET OUT TO OUTDO ONE ANOTHER?

"There was always competition in Kiss, although the fiercest competition was between Gene and Paul. It still is. But I'd not fight about it too much because I'd always get the spotlight on stage for my solos, and then I got my first lead vocal with 'Shock Me' [on the 'Love Gun' album from 1977]. But it was healthy competition, because we created something special. The chemistry couldn't be explained; because we were from such diverse backgrounds. It just clicked. However, I got caught up with the drugs, the booze and the women. Rock'n'roll did me in!"

WE SUSPECT THERE ARE FANS WHO'D LOVE TO HEAR YOU PERFORM THE ACE FREHLEY ALBUM FROM '78 IN ITS ENTIRETY.

"We actually did it in its entirety with my new band at a convention in New Jersey last year [the Kiss Expo at the Hilton hotel in Parsippany on 9 December 2018]. There were 2000 people there and we did the whole album in sequence from beginning to end. There wasn't much publicity, but we do have a video of it. Actually, I was quite superstitious about the 'Spaceman' album because that was released 40 years after that first solo album, so I made sure I only had nine songs on it as that first album only had nine songs. The cover of 'Spaceman' was also a recreation of the photo session that I did with Barry Levine back in 1978 with the throne."

SOME FANS MAY STILL HANKER FOR FREHLEY'S COMET. IS THAT A PROJECT YOU WOULD CONSIDER REVIVING?

"That almost feels like another lifetime for me. It was another era. I was getting high. I wasn't as focussed. It was a different me."

IT WAS A GREAT MOMENT IN 1988, THOUGH, WHEN YOU PLAYED WITH FREHLEY'S COMET AT THE LIMELIGHT IN NEW YORK AND GENE AND PAUL STEPPED UP TO PERFORM 'DEUCE' WITH YOU AS AN ENCORE. THE GUYS FROM ANTHRAX WERE GOING ABSOLUTELY NUTS DOWN AT THE FRONT!

"Yeah, that was a great night. The Limelight was always an interesting place!"

WE'VE HAD THIS ONGOING SAGA OF GENE AND PAUL REFUSING TO LET YOU PLAY WITH KISS AGAIN, NOTABLY AT THE HALL OF FAME. THAT SCENARIO FELT RATHER TRAGIC.

"I think we have a really good relationship now. I text Paul back and forth and we've worked together, as I have with Gene. It would be nice to go back out with them again, but it's not my call. I would seriously consider it, but the money would have to be right. I'm not gonna take Tommy Thayer's salary! It would certainly sell more tickets to have me involved. I have a gut feeling it will happen."

Photos: Getty Images/Tom Hill/Wireimage; Getty Images/Michael Poliard; Getty Images/Michael Ochs Archives; Getty Images/Sam Emerson/Corbis

WHAT ABOUT MERELY A GUEST APPEARANCE?
"That would have to be presented to me in the right way."

HAVE YOU DISCUSSED IT WITH PETER CRISS?
"I haven't discussed it with Pete. I recently invited him to play with me when we came near to his home, but he declined, which kinda surprised me. But I think he hasn't been 100% health-wise recently, so that may have had something to do with his decision."

Backstage relaxing in '79

YOUR PAST BEHAVIOUR HAS BEEN WELL DOCUMENTED IN INTERVIEWS AND YOUR AUTOBIOGRAPHY *NO REGRETS*. IS YOUR REPUTATION AS THE BAD BOY OF KISS JUSTIFIED?
"In a way yes. I think that used to be my reputation in the '70s and '80s because in-between crashing cars and overindulging I was probably the worst of the four of us. But even as early as the '80s I started seeking help, though it never really stuck because you'd go out on tour with bands confined on the bus and I'd end up having a beer, smoking a joint...

"In Kiss Gene and Paul knew how to push my buttons and a lot of the time I'd drink because of decisions they made. I've long since learnt to not have any resentment and to work through any problems that I've been facing. As a result of that I feel almost reborn, because I no longer find myself having to look over my shoulder when I'm driving because I've been drinking, or worrying about being stopped at borders because I'm carrying something on me."

SO YOU GOT TO MAKE YOUR PEACE WITH GENE AND PAUL, YES?
"Gene came over to my house and we co-wrote those two songs for 'Spaceman' and I played with him in Australia before hiring his band and going on to Japan. Everyone thinks we hate each other, but that's not the case at all. I know that I put those guys through hell in the past. Sometimes I was too drunk at sound checks, but sobriety has made me more dependable and reliable. That's a big plus should we ever do anything going forward with Kiss."

THAT'S GREAT TO HEAR! I REMEMBER YOU FALLING OVER AT A PERSONAL APPEARANCE WITH KISS IN LONDON IN 1982 DURING A SIGNING SESSION...
"Well, I've never had great balance to be honest, even today! Because I drank for so many years I guess people just think I've started drinking again."

DO YOU THINK IT COULD BE AN EAR PROBLEM WITH REGARDS TO BALANCE?
"Hmm. I remember suffering really badly from vertigo once and having to crawl to the bathroom because my balance was even worse than usual. I'm very prone to bronchitis. I get it at least once a year and in this instance it just wouldn't clear up and I was taking different antibiotics. My doctor told me to take this steroid for five days and then to stop taking it. I think that may have had something to do with the vertigo because I read that you shouldn't just stop taking the medication. Still, at least it cleared up my lungs!"

> "I THINK WE HAVE A REALLY GOOD RELATIONSHIP NOW. I TEXT PAUL BACK AND FORTH AND WE'VE WORKED TOGETHER, AS I HAVE WITH GENE. IT WOULD BE NICE TO GO BACK OUT WITH THEM AGAIN, BUT IT'S NOT MY CALL. I WOULD SERIOUSLY CONSIDER IT, BUT THE MONEY WOULD HAVE TO BE RIGHT. I HAVE A GUT FEELING IT WILL HAPPEN."

YOU WERE REUNITED WITH PAUL AND GENE AS RECENTLY AS OCTOBER 2018 ON THE KISS KRUISE, WHERE YOU ALSO PERFORMED A SOLO SET WITH YOUR BAND. WAS THAT FUN OR STRESSFUL?
"Oh, it was definitely fun. [Kiss manager] Doc McGhee came into my cabin just after the boat had left port and asked me if I wanted to do an acoustic set with Paul, Gene, Bruce Kulick, Tommy Thayer and Eric Singer. I was just getting unpacked and wasn't really prepared at all, but I just had to jump up and do it straight away. I wish I'd had an electric guitar, though, as I really couldn't get the solos quite right because the strings on the acoustic were too heavy."

Ace performing with Kiss in 1981 shortly before he left for the first time

WE CAN'T NOT ASK YOU ABOUT THAT FACEBOOK POST, THE ONE IN WHICH YOU DECLARED "THE GLOVES ARE OFF." I MEAN, CLAIMING THAT SIMMONS GROPED YOUR WIFE RACHAEL IS A PRETTY EXTREME ACCUSATION, ISN'T IT?

"What pissed me off about Gene was that whenever he goes public he states I was fired. Peter was fired. I always quit the band. It infuriates me. The fans know the truth. With regards that Facebook post, there was some stuff between Gene and Rachael that was a little unpleasant. But as far as that statement goes, I've since removed myself from that situation."

DO YOU SHARE GENE'S OFTEN-REPEATED VIEWS ON THE DEMISE OF THE ROCK SCENE?

"I don't know why he says that. Rock'n'roll is alive and well. He gets caught up in bashing people. It's a side of his personality I've never liked, this 'holier than thou' attitude. I mean, he's spent the last 40 years being down on drugs and alcohol and now he's a spokesman for a marijuana company [Invictus MD Strategies] and you can buy Kiss wine. It's hypocritical. He speaks without thinking, so you just take everything he says with a grain of salt."

"But I know the other side of Gene. He's a sweet guy. It's not widely known, but I had a facelift before the '96 reunion tour and I was about to leave hospital to go to a retreat for celebrities to stay for a week to recover from having the plastic surgery. I was laying there on my hospital bed about to depart when Gene shows up just at the same time the hospital orderly comes along to tell me the limo is downstairs and goes to put me in a wheelchair. This is something they do in the States. I don't know if it's standard practice in England too, to stop the hospital being sued if you slip on the way out. Anyway, Gene says to the orderly 'I don't want to see Ace in a wheelchair'. He picks me up and carries me outside to the car. That's the side of Gene many people don't see. He's a caring guy."

KISS'S FAREWELL TOUR IS WELL AND TRULY UNDERWAY AND PRODUCTION-WISE IT'S AN ABSOLUTE MONSTER OF SHOW. BUT THERE ARE REPORTS OF PAUL LIP-SYNCHING. DO YOU HAVE A VIEW ON THAT?

"I really don't have a view on whether Paul is lip-synching or not, because I've not seen them perform on this tour. I've never seen Kiss perform without me in the band. I would think that Paul would have more respect for the fans than to do that, but what I can tell you is that he performed a great vocal on 'Fire And Water' on my 'Origins, Vol. 1' album. It brought tears to my eyes when he e-mailed me the vocal and I first heard his work. We subsequently did the video together, which was a lot of fun. It was an absolute pleasure to work with him on that track."

I'M SURE THAT MOST KISS FANS WOULD THINK THAT YOU AND PETER SHOULD BE A PART OF THE FINAL SHOW, WHEREVER AND WHENEVER IT IS. IF THE CIRCUMSTANCES WERE RIGHT, WOULD YOU DO IT?

"Like I said, if it was proposed and the money was right then I'd do it. It would be exciting, not just for me but also the fans. I remember that opening night at Dodgers Stadium when we got back together in 1996 was so surreal. With the make-up and the outfits I really felt like I'd time-travelled back to the '70s. It just seemed effortless. So if it was like that in '96, then it would be the same now. I know all the moves, I know all the cues. I haven't worn the make-up since I did a Dunkin' Donuts commercial in 2007, and I don't relish putting it back on, because I'd have to shave off my beard, but I'm sure it would become really easy pretty quickly!"

Photos: Getty Images/Robin Platzer/IMAGES; Getty Images/Luciano Viti

ACE ON ACE

The world according to The Spaceman via his finest quotes over the years...

"I WENT TO MY FRIEND'S HOUSE ONE DAY AND HE HAD AN ELECTRIC GUITAR HE'D JUST BOUGHT WITH A TINY LITTLE AMP. I TURNED THE VOLUME UP TO 10 AND I HIT ONE CHORD AND I SAID, 'I'M IN LOVE'."

"I knew I was destined to be a rock star. I just knew it. I've always had the power of foresight."

"I can't even read notes. But I can teach someone how to make a guitar smoke."

"FINDING A GOOD BAND IS LIKE FINDING A GOOD WIFE. YOU GOT TO KEEP TRYING TILL YOU FIND THE RIGHT ONE."

"My life has been a rollercoaster ride, but somehow I've always been able to land on my feet and still play the guitar."

"Pete Townshend taught me how to play rhythm guitar. Townshend can play the same chord in 20 different places on the neck. It really advanced my style and my chord work, and it helped me as a songwriter."

"BY THE TIME I'M 40 INTERPLANETARY TRAVEL WILL BE COMMON. NOBODY WILL WANT TO TALK TO ME ANYWAY."

"I don't like to practise. I like spontaneity. When I don't play guitar for a week and I pick it up again, I play better."

"I DON'T SEE THIS PLANET BEING... THEY'RE TALKING ABOUT HOW THEY'RE TURNING AROUND THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS HERE, BUT I THINK IT'S ALREADY TOO LATE."

"I SEE UFOS EVERY DAY."

"MY LIFE, MY CAREER, HAS BEEN LIKE A ROLLERCOASTER. I'VE EITHER BEEN AN ENORMOUS SUCCESS OR JUST A DOWN-AND-OUT FAILURE."

"Does luck play a role in success, particularly in a creative field? Sure it does. But if you don't have the balls to give it a shot you're destined to fail."

"I personally believe this: we have only today. Yesterday's gone and tomorrow is uncertain. That's why they call it the present. And sobriety really is a gift... for those who are willing to receive it."

"IF I'D KNOWN I WOULD HAVE INFLUENCED SO MANY GUITARISTS I WOULD HAVE PRACTISED MORE."

Quotes collated by Howard Johnson. Photos: Getty Images/Steve Morley; Redferns; Getty Images/Richard Creamer/Michael Ochs Archives

ACE FREHLEY

"I have a lot of diehard fans. Ace Frehley fans and Kiss fans are the greatest fans in the world."

"If I'm so popular why did they replace me with Tommy Thayer?"

"I had a feeling it was gonna work out, because not only did I enjoy the music and hit it off with the guys, but I was into theatrical rock and was willing to wear make-up and do anything to make it."

"EVERY TIME GENE AND PAUL USE MY MAKE-UP THEY HAVE TO PAY ME A ROYALTY CHEQUE. I THINK THEY CHANGED THE MAKE-UP SO THEY DIDN'T HAVE TO PAY ME."

"We're there to take you away from your problems and rock and roll all nite and party every day for those two hours you're at the concert."

"FOR ME IT'S ABOUT THE MUSIC. AND IT ALWAYS HAS BEEN. MAYBE FOR SOME OTHER PEOPLE IT'S MORE ABOUT MONEY."

WHO DESIGNED THE LOGO?
The band's guitarist Ace Frehley, who had been encouraged to develop an interest in graphic art by a careers officer at his Bronx high school.

WHAT'S THE STORY?
Frehley came up with the idea for a logo featuring two lightning bolts, supposedly drawing out a rough version on a napkin in a New York restaurant.
"I did the logo with a felt tip pen for a couple of early Kiss ads," Frehley says. "And then when it came time to do our first record, since [band member] Paul [Stanley] was artistically trained, he took my design and cleaned it up with a rapidograph pen."
Frehley showed how the Kiss logo would work by writing it across a poster for Wicked Lester, Stanley's and bassist Gene Simmons's pre-Kiss band. The WL logo apparently featured a lightning bolt.

WHEN DID IT FIRST APPEAR ON AN ALBUM?
The logo was used on the band's debut album 'Kiss', released on Casablanca on 18 February 1974. It has featured on every one of the band's 20 studio albums since, though never again in the distinctive rhinestone format that featured on that first release.

DID YOU KNOW?
As Stanley himself has pointed out, his reworking of Frehley's original idea was still hand-drawn. If you look carefully, the second S is a slightly different shape to the first: it's slightly thicker. The logo was never tidied up – even after the band became mega-successful – and is now an iconic part of rock history, featuring on more than 5,000 licenced products.
Kiss's lightning bolts do bear an unfortunate similarity to the Nazi SS symbol, which has caused some controversy. It's clearly unintentional, given Simmons's and Stanley's Jewish heritage. As this symbol is now outlawed in Germany and other countries, the group use an alternative logo on all German albums and merchandise, where each lightning bolt is replaced with a backwards Z.

Words by Ross Sampson. Photo: Getty Images/Richard Cremer/Michael Ochs Archives